



# BENNY GOODMAN

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

1909 - 2009

## QUOTES ABOUT CLIENT BENNY GOODMAN

**"The brilliant explosion known as Benny Goodman went off in 1935, and it hasn't gone out yet."**

*Whitney Ballant in "The New Yorker" 12/28/77*

**"He remains one of the great contributors to music... people are fortunate to be able to enjoy this outstandingly talented man."**

*John McDonough in "Coda", a Canadian Jazz Publication 9/74*

**Benny Goodman is our "International Ambassador with Clarinet."**

*President John F. Kennedy, 1962, upon Goodman's return from a State Department sponsored concert tour in Russia*

*Benny's own quote re: his landmark Carnegie Hall Concert in 1938 from the book, "Kingdom of Swing":*

**"That night at Carnegie Hall was a great experience. When the thing was first put up to me I was a little dubious about it, not knowing just what would be expected of us. But as soon as it was understood that we could handle things in our own way, and let the people listen to it as they would any other kind of music, the proposition really began to mean something. Personally, it was the thrill of my life to walk out on that stage with people just hemming the band in (some overflow audience actually sat on the stage) and hear the greeting the guys got."**

**“Above all else, he was a great player, one of the greatest American music has produced. He brought his absolute talent and his invincible love of music to the fore every time he played. There are many other things connected to society and ethnicity that are often mentioned in a discussion of Benny Goodman but all of them are connected to his overwhelming affection for the art of the music and the fairness it should be allowed to express.”**

***Stanley Crouch, Jazz Historian, Author and Professor, Columbia University Jazz Program and Columnist, NY Daily News.***

**“From his earliest small group recordings through his big bands of the swing era – of which he surely was a king – and on until the end of his days, Benny Goodman was a master of the clarinet and a bandleader admired by musicians and non-musicians alike, across all musical categories and across the globe. His quicksilver tone, his insistent drive to swing the music, his ability to execute cleanly the most dramatic filigrees of passages – all these qualities made him one of the most imitated instrumentalists in the world. Equally important to his legacy is his courage in proclaiming that music is a universal language transcending race and nation. Both as musical units and as experiments in democracy, his integrated bands comprised magnificent gestures toward perfection in our time.”**

***Robert G. O’Meally, Director, Jazz Studies Columbia University, NYC***

**“I had never heard anyone play like Benny Goodman and had never seen anyone like him on the stage. He seemed completely without ego, which does not mean without personality. I thought that even when he was playing he was smiling, but that of course must have been his eyes. And I remember he wore glasses, and that seemed strange to me. I had been to the theatre a lot, but this man was not like any other. I realize now that what impressed me and stayed with me in memory was - the**

**sounds he made. He played so purely. The music seemed to come from him, not just the instrument he played with such mastery.”**

***Marian Seldes, Actress***

**“Goodman was one of the most incredible players the field has ever known. It wasn’t just that his own improvisation was marvelous, the spirit, the verve, the vitality, even humor he played with, but the sheer technical mastery. He played that thing like it was a yo-yo. The only thing comparable from a technical point of view would be [Art] Tatum.”**

***Mel Powell, Pianist-Composer***

**“He was totally in command of everything. He was always a heavy practicer. Practiced all the time, He had ideas on how everything should be done in the band – bass, everything. Nobody argued with him, everybody had great respect for him.”**

***Jimmy Maxwell, Leader Trumpet Player***

**“Listening to Benny talk about the clarinet was like listening to a surgeon get hung up on a scalpel.”**

***Artie Shaw, Clarinetist and Band-Leader***

**“Mr. Goodman could not so much as poke his clarinet into camera range yesterday without producing an ovation. His followers, whose names – as you may have guessed – are legion, beat their hands as though they had toughened them in brine for days. They stamped their feet, and there didn’t seem to be rubber heel in the house. They whistled, they bleated, they cooed and they got rhythm and they almost drowned out the picture...they were yowling for more when we left.”**

***Frank S. Nugent, NYTimes review (Jan.13, 1938) of Warner Bros. film, “Hollywood Hotel”***